Marshall Memo 372

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
February 7, 2011

In This Issue:

1. Sobering statistics on the teaching of evolution in U.S. high schools
2. Richard and Rebecca DuFour on refusing to let students fail
3. Maximizing the impact of instructional coaches
4. The advantages of teaching writing in a computer lab
5. A teacher becomes a convert to online education
6. Advice on creating a class website
7. Making high-school transfer students feel welcome
8. How travel can take educators to a higher level
9. Unannounced videotaping of teachers for evaluation
10. No-pass/no-drive – does it work?
11. What factors close the achievement gap in primary-grade math?
12. Websites: (a) Black History Month resources; (b) Black history videos; (c) Student assessment continuum

Quotes of the Week

"We will not let you off the hook. We will see to it that you do what is necessary to be successful. We won't place you in a less rigorous curriculum, nor will we lower our standards for this course or grade level. We will give you the support, time, and structure to help you be successful, but we will not lower the bar."

Richard and Rebecca DuFour (see item #2)

"It is illogical to argue that we teach students responsibility by allowing them to choose to be irresponsible, and we have a century of evidence that this strategy does not work!"

Richard and Rebecca DuFour (*ibid.*)

"Once student writing is visible on a computer screen, it becomes subject to instant teacher intervention… What emerges is something like an apprenticeship model, with the teacher providing immediate, explicit feedback on actual performance."

Anthony Scimone (see item #4)

"Traveling forces you to build some serious skills. There will be long lines and painful transportation delays, so you *will* learn patience. There will be scary moments, so you *will* learn courage. And there will be miraculous moments, so for sure you will expand your emotional range."

Lillie Marshall (see item #8)

1. Sobering Statistics on the Teaching of Evolution in U.S. High Schools

According to a survey of 926 U.S. high-school biology teachers reported in *Science* (covered in this *USA Today* article), most teachers "fail to forthrightly explain" evolution to their students, despite the overwhelming scientific consensus and decades of evidence from genes, fossils, and field observations confirming the idea. Some details:

- Only 28% of teachers "unabashedly introduce evidence that evolution has occurred and craft lesson plans so that evolution is a theme that unifies disparate topics in biology."
- 60% approach evolution cautiously, "neither strong advocates for evolutionary biology nor explicit endorsers of nonscientific alternatives."
- 13% advocate biblical creationism or "intelligent design" creationism to their students.

The cautious 60 percent seem to lack confidence in their ability to defend evolution if challenged and try to avoid controversy in three ways:

• Some teach evolution as though it applies only to molecular biology, avoiding discussion of macroevolution of species. "At best, this approach sacrifices a rich understanding of the diversity of species," say Penn State professors Michael Berkman and Eric Plutzer, authors of the study. "At worst it lends credence to the creationist claim that there is no evidence for one species giving rise to others."

• Some teachers tell students they need to learn about evolution because it's on the state test – that they don't have to "believe" evolution but must be able to answer test questions about it. One teacher in Michigan tells students they need to understand evolution because the biology curriculum "is organized as if evolution is true."

• A sizable number of teachers present all positions on evolution, telling students they should make up their own minds "based on their own beliefs and research, not on what a textbook or on what a teacher says." Berkman and Plutzer comment: "But does a 15-year-old student really have enough information to reject thousands of peer-reviewed scientific papers? This approach tells students that well-established concepts like common ancestry can be debated in the same way we debate personal opinions."

"The cautious 60 percent fail to explain the nature of scientific inquiry, undermine the authority of established experts, and legitimize creationist arguments," say Berkman and Plutzer. As a result, "they may play a far more important role in hindering scientific literacy in the United States than the smaller number of explicit creationists."

The Penn State study helps explain why the U.S. ranks 34th out of 35 developed nations in public acceptance of evolution (only Turkey ranks lower). But today's teachers must

contend with public attitudes shaped by previous generations of teachers, as well as the teaching of others outside the schools. According to a 2007 report, nearly one-third of Americans say that evolution is "absolutely false" and have particular problems with the idea that humans share a common ancestor with chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans. "Not many teachers have the backbone to stand up to parents and school boards for evolution," says Jon Miller, the author of this study.

Coursework and professional development appear to be the key to more accurate and effective teaching of evolution. Teachers who do the best job explaining it are those who have taken a course in this specific area of biology. "Combined with continued successes in courtrooms and the halls of government," conclude Berkman and Plutzer, "this approach offers our best chance of increasing the science literacy of future generations."

"Evolution Teaching Poor in U.S. High Schools" by Dan Vergano in *USA Today*, Jan. 28, 2011 http://www.usatoday.com/communities/sciencefair/post/2011/01/evolution-teaching-poor-/1; The *Science* article is by Michael Berkman and Eric Plutzer.

Back to page one

2. Richard and Rebecca DuFour on Refusing to Let Students Fail

In this paid column in *Education Week*, Richard and Rebecca DuFour respond to a concern they often hear: that providing additional time and support to struggling students has an "enabling" effect. Educators who raise this point believe that "students who fail to study, fail to complete their work, or fail to meet deadlines should suffer the logical consequence of their actions – failure." The argument is that logical consequences will teach these students to be more responsible in the future.

The DuFours agree that self-discipline, a strong work ethic, time-management skills, the ability to meet deadlines, responsibility, and resilience are desirable qualities. The question is what approach is most likely to instill these qualities in students who don't innately possess them. Some students in this category, when told, "You must do this work and turn it in on time, or you will fail," are fine with failing. "Allowing them the option of not doing the work merely reinforces their irresponsibility," say the DuFours. "When schools make working and learning optional, both students and educators can take the easy way out."

No parent would say to a child, "You must mow the lawn by Saturday, and if you don't mow it by Saturday, you will never have to mow it!" – yet this is basically what the do-it-or-fail approach in schools amounts to, say the DuFours. "It is illogical to argue that we teach students responsibility by allowing them to choose to be irresponsible, and we have a century of evidence that this strategy does not work!" Much more likely to teach responsibility are policies like these:

- If students don't study enough, the school requires them to spend time with a tutor.
- If students don't finish their homework, they are required to spend time in an environment where completion of homework is carefully monitored.

A school with policies like these, say the DuFours, "strives to teach students responsibility by insisting students act responsibly – even under duress – in the hope that students will ultimately internalize the lesson."

Such policies send the following message to students: "We will not let you off the hook We will see to it that you do what is necessary to be successful. We won't place you in a less rigorous curriculum, nor will we lower our standards for this course or grade level. We will give you the support, time, and structure to help you be successful, but we will not lower the bar."

"Systematic Intervention: The Antithesis of Enabling" by Richard DuFour and Rebecca DuFour in *Education Week*, Jan. 26, 2011 (Vol. 30, #18, p. 11), no e-link available

Back to page one

3. Maximizing the Impact of Instructional Coaches

In this *Journal of Staff Development* article, David Yopp, Elizabeth Burroughs, and Jennifer Luebeck from Montana State University and Clare Heidema, Arlene Mitchell, and John Sutton from RMC Research Corporation share advice on how teachers can get the most out of their coaches:

• *Ask for specific feedback*. Telling a coach to watch for "anything" during a classroom observation isn't helpful. An example of a more focused request: "Would you watch my questioning strategies and student reactions?"

• *Be an active participant with your coach*. This means setting the scene before classroom observations (what content and skills will be taught, what method of instruction will be used, what difficulties are anticipated) and actively reflecting on what happened in a post-observation conference.

• *Communicate your needs*. For example, a teacher might tell a coach, "I need help getting my students interested in mathematics. They don't pay attention during my lesson, and even when I do group work, they don't stay focused. Before long, they are off doing other stuff or causing trouble." This is the kind of request a good coach can sink his or her teeth into.

• *Say whether during-lesson communication will occur*. In the middle of a class, one teacher suddenly asked the coach, "Do you know a better way to explain this?" The coach was taken aback and had difficulty responding. It's better to agree in advance on whether there will be any during-class interactions. Teachers should also be clear about whether they want coaches to remain in one place during lessons or circulate and interact with students.

• *Take advantage of your coach's content expertise*. While all coaches can offer advice on generic topics like classroom management, cooperative learning, and how to engage students, research indicates that coaches deliver the biggest bang for the buck in their content area. In other words, literacy coaches can contribute the most on literacy issues, mathematics coaches on math issues.

• *Be sure to schedule pre- and post-observation conferences*. Some teachers cut corners by not using all three parts of effective coaching: a pre-lesson conference, a full-lesson

observation, and a post-lesson conference. Doing all three components takes extra time, but this structure is most likely to yield the maximum benefit.

For math coaching, the authors suggest that teachers ask themselves the following questions with respect to: (a) their personal level of confidence, and (b) how much they want to partner with their coach on the issue:

- How confident do you feel creating and teaching mathematical applications and connections to other areas of mathematics?
- How confident are you with the mathematical reasoning behind the mathematics you teach (understanding why we teach it), how it relates to other mathematics topics, and why it is valid?
- How confident do you feel managing a classroom where students are engaged in inquiry-based or discovery-based tasks?
- How confident do you feel encouraging student participation?
- How confident do you feel creating an environment where students listen to one another?

"How to Be a Wise Consumer of Coaching" by David Yopp, Elizabeth Burroughs, Jennifer Luebeck, Clare Heidema, Arlene Mitchell, and John Sutton in *Journal of Staff Development*, February 2011 (Vol. 32, #1, p. 50-53), no e-link available. Yopp can be reached at yopp@math.montana.edu.

Back to page one

4. The Advantages of Teaching Writing in a Computer Lab

(Originally titled "Real-Time Writing Instruction")

In this *Educational Leadership* article, Manhattanville College professor Anthony Scimone makes an impassioned case for what he calls "real-time writing instruction" – students spending at least one-third of their English language arts classes composing on computers in a lab, with the teacher circulating to read, respond to, and guide the unfolding drafts.

Scimone says that when students hand-write compositions at home, things often go wrong. Rubrics are ignored and model texts forgotten. Having students hand-write compositions in class isn't much better. "Many students take a giant step backward in their English classes when they are required to draft on paper," he says. Teachers call students up and struggle to make sense of handwritten work, and are able to help only a few students. Teachers also have to keep an eye out for discipline problems.

"Real-time writing instruction alters these old habits," says Scimone. "It puts the teacher in motion around the room with the ability to look at screens for a few minutes at a time or sit next to a student and read text together… Once student writing is visible on a computer screen, it becomes subject to instant teacher intervention… What emerges is something like an apprenticeship model, with the teacher providing immediate, explicit feedback on actual performance… Student and teacher can now wrestle with concepts barely

touched upon in class discussions in a way that forces clarity, attention to diction, and precision of expression."

Real-time writing also allows teachers to teach grammar in context. "Suddenly, student-generated examples of subject-verb disagreement, dangling modifiers, and passive voice appear on screen, contextualized in the student's own constructions, where correctness is more likely to matter than in some abstract example… Text that is easy to view is easier to edit. When emerging writers do not have to contend with reading their own penmanship, they become more willing and skilled self-editors, going beyond surface errors to tackle substantive questions of structure and usage." Editing becomes part of the composing process rather than a separate operation done later.

Another advantage of writing in a computer lab is that classroom management is rarely an issue. Students tend to be engaged from the start, and if the computers are around the outside of the room facing outward, the teacher can easily monitor all students and move around to keep everyone on task.

A final advantage of real-time composition is that it improves the quality of research projects and student collaboration.

Scimone closes with advice to teachers on making the best use of whole-class computer writing:

- Talk up the advantages of the writing lab to students: more support in the formative stages, less homework, fewer rewrites, and probably higher grades.
- Make assignment guidelines and rubrics available in handouts or on a screen.
- Get a rolling chair so you can sit beside students to read together.
- Don't immediately start reading over a student's shoulder. Ask, "Is there anything you've written so far that you would like me to read?"
- No matter what you read, find something to praise before offering a correction.
- When you read work aloud, read quietly enough so only you and the student can hear.
- Invite students who are comfortable doing so to read one another's work.
- Teach students how to save or e-mail their drafts so they can continue work at home or in a library.
- Debrief with students, asking what they like and don't like about writing in a lab.

"Real-Time Writing Instruction" by Anthony Scimone in *Educational Leadership*, February 2011 (Vol. 68, #5, online only), http://www.ascd.org; Scimone can be reached at scimonea@mville.edu.

Back to page one

5. A Teacher Becomes a Convert to Online Education

(Originally titled "How I Became a Convert to Online Learning")

In this *Educational Leadership* article, Missouri junior-high teacher Nick Kremer describes how teaching an online summer course in creative writing helped him overcome his previous resistance to online instruction. Here were his previous objections and why he changed his mind on each one:

• *Objection 1: Online classes require less wo*rk. Contact time is difficult to regulate in online classes, and Kremer worried that students might not get as much out of the course. In fact, he was able to create lessons that engaged students at different achievement levels and found there was more time on task writing than in his conventional classes.

• *Objection 2: Online classes lack meaningful interaction*. Kremer thought students would miss out on face-to-face communication and might abuse online discussion boards by participating minimally. His solution was to stop counting the number of times each student contributed and instead rate them on the *quality* of their contributions. He also gave them more choice of discussion topics. He was surprised to find that interactions online were more focused and productive than conversations in the classroom. "Free of classroom distractions," he says, "students were extremely interested in reading and responding to one another's work on the peer revision board, a class blog where they published their drafts and received feedback from classmates." Students also "caucused" in smaller groups to discuss drafts and get feedback. Kremer recorded podcasts of his comments on students' papers and found "conferencing" considerably easier and more effective online.

• *Objection 3: Cheating runs rampant online*. Kremer remembered an online course in college where some students hired a math major to log in and take quizzes and tests for them. His way of forestalling this was to give personal, in-depth assignments that students couldn't easily plagiarize. For example, in a nonfiction unit, students had to create a memoir map to brainstorm possible autobiographical writing topics, submit character sketches of real people they knew, and compose written self-portraits. With quizzes, Kremer was less stringent, allowing students to use reference materials and take the quiz multiple times if they didn't do well at first.

• *Objection 4: Online classes are discriminatory*. In Kremer's school, a number of students didn't have access to computers, and he worried how this – and some students' weak computer skills – could be overcome. It turned out to be quite simple. At the beginning of the course, he held a live class in a computer lab, had all students log into the ANGEL program they would use for the course, and walked them through the process of working online. To deal with access issues, he arranged for any student who didn't have computer access at home to use the school media center lab. It turned out that no students needed this option since those without home computers were able to walk to their neighborhood library.

With all of these problems solved, Kremer had a successful experience with his online course. He appreciated the lack of classroom management issues, not having to copy materials or spend money on supplies, not worrying about scheduling time in the computer lab, and being able to grade students' work instantly and have access to a permanent record of all student work and correspondence.

"How I Became a Convert to Online Learning" by Nick Kremer in *Educational Leadership*, February 2011 (Vol. 68, #5, p. 63-67), http://www.ascd.org; Kremer can be reached at nkremer@columbia.k12.mo.us.

Back to page one

6. Advice on Creating a Class Website

(Originally titled "Making the Most of Your Class Website")

In this *Educational Leadership* article, Texas educator Lemoyne Dunn analyzes five levels of classroom websites. Which to use depends on the purpose – and the amount of time available.

• *Level 1: Static* – This kind of website disseminates information that doesn't change during the school year – the teacher's name and contact information, class rules and expectations, the syllabus and class schedule, and school policies. Here's a sample: http://www.mrsrenz.net/mrsrenz.htm.

• *Level 2: Semi-static* – This level shares information that changes periodically – upcoming school events, schedule tweaks, class news, photos, and awards and recognitions. An example: http://www.kdoerge.com/studentart.html.

• *Level 3: Supplemental resource* – This kind often contains Level 1 and 2 information, but supplements it with periodically updated links to teacher-created study guides and outlines and also games, puzzles, videos, and the course textbook site, all related to the curriculum. Here's an example: http://mrmccoysclass.blogspot.com.

• *Level 4: Integral curricular* – This kind might include elements of the first three levels but add two-way communication related to the curriculum and allow students to be more actively involved. The teacher might post a higher-order curriculum-related question every few days and require students to post a response, taking a discussion deeper than would be possible during class time. Level 4 websites can also help the teacher check for misconceptions and misunderstandings. Blogs, wikis, and discussion boards are common platforms at this level. Here's an example: http://mrlicata.ning.com.

• *Level 5: Pedagogical memory* – This kind of website acts as a dynamic knowledge repository, extending classroom content to a new level. "Students collaborate to solve problems and answer one another's questions," explains Dunn, "and their additions, deletions, corrections, or enhancements of content on the side add to the body of knowledge in the course." Students can turn in homework on the site, making it possible for the teacher to access their work remotely, and students who are out of school for extended periods can take part in the class through the website. Most Level 5 class websites are password protected.

Many teachers use Moodle to create Level 4 and 5 websites – http://moodle.org. Wikispaces is a good for interactive wikis – http://www.wikispaces.com/content/for/teachers. And Blogger and Wordpress are widely used for creating blogs: http://www.blogger.com and http://www.wordpress.com.

"Making the Most of Your Class Website" by Lemoyne Dunn in *Educational Leadership*, February 2011 (Vol. 68, #5, p. 60-62), http://www.ascd.org; Dunn can be reached at Lemoyne.Dunn@unt.edu.

Back to page one

7. Making High-School Transfer Students Feel Welcome

In this *Education Week* article, Patterson University professor Thelma Baxter and Fordham University professor Bruce Cooper offer advice to high schools on how they can reduce the stresses and strains on transfer students. They were shocked when an Omaha, Nebraska transfer student killed the assistant principal in his new school and wounded the principal before taking his own life. "Certainly, this is an extreme and terrible case," write Baxter and Cooper. "But students who transfer schools, particularly in the upper grades, are under extreme pressure: Will the other students welcome them? Even talk to them? How will they find their place and build new friendships at that age and stage?" Their suggestions:

• *A handbook* – Every school should have a policy manual that's given to all transfer students and their families. It should include the academic calendar, names and numbers of key school personnel, and procedures that make new students feel comfortable and informed.

• *A student transfer committee* – This group, made up of two students from each grade level and chaired by a guidance counselor or senior teacher, should meet with each transfer student when he or she arrives and track progress. The grade-level guidance counselor should meet with transfer students individually every two weeks and report back to the student transfer committee.

• *A welcoming group* – Each transferee should be introduced to a group of three or four students at his or her grade level who share gender, race, religion, neighborhood, extracurricular activities, or academic interests with the new arrival.

• *Monthly check-in* – Each transfer student should meet individually with a guidance counselor to discuss any problems or concerns – bullying, isolation, academic issues, etc.

• *Special activities* – Each semester, the school should involve transfer students in an activity like bowling, ice skating, attending a baseball game or a school concert to help them socialize and form friendships.

"How to Help Transfer Students Adjust" by Thelma Baxter and Bruce Cooper in *Education Week*, Jan. 26, 2011 (Vol. 30, #18, p. 23), no e-link available

Back to page one

8. How Travel Can Take Educators to a Higher Level

In this *Following the Equator* article, Boston high-school teacher Lillie Marshall, who returned to the classroom in September 2010 after a nine-month trip around the world, shares what international travel can do for educators:

• Enrich understanding of what you teach – For example, traveling to Vietnam brought home the abstractions of the Vietnam War to Marshall; spending three months in Ghana brought *Things Fall Apart* to life.

• Build confidence, strength, and patience – "Traveling forces you to build some serious skills," writes Marshall. "There will be long lines and painful transportation delays, so you *will* learn patience. There will be scary moments, so you *will* learn courage. And there will be miraculous moments, so for sure you will expand your emotional range."

• Raise your expectations for student behavior – "I thought some of my colleagues in Boston Public Schools had great classroom management," says Marshall, "but seeing the sky-high behavioral expectations in Ghana was eye-opening."

• Appreciate the privileges of U.S. schools, no matter how "poor" – The school in rural Ghana where Marshall volunteered had no computers, no electricity, no indoor plumbing, and classes of 40 students. "Now that I'm back in American schools," she says, "I'm feeling a whole lot less whiny and a whole lot more appreciative, which makes it easier to calmly find new solutions for our (relative) resource shortages."

• Make you an even better role model – Marshall's students are awed by her saga and envision traveling themselves. "If you dream of doing it, you *can* make it happen," she tells them.

• Focus more fully on your classroom – In her initial five years of teaching, the question, "What else is out there?" buzzed in Marshall's ear. Having answered that question in her travels, she says, "I find myself so much calmer and more present, and as a result I can be a more effective and hard-working teacher."

• Build writing prowess through blogging – "Having others actually read what you write and leave comments creates an 'authentic' writing experience that spurs an English teacher like me to really understand the importance of teaching clarity, excitement, and correct grammar in writing to students," she says.

• Build contacts – Marshall connected students in Japan, Thailand, Ghana, and Boston with each other, published her students' writing internationally, and built a list of cyber guest speakers to draw on.

• Gather stories and photos – Marshall's curriculum is enriched by the stories her students in Ghana wrote about their lives, accompanied by photos.

• Believe in dreams – Having braved some daunting challenges herself, Marshall is tougher on students about staying up an extra hour to finish homework. "More profoundly," she concludes, "meeting local people in developing countries who have sacrificed everything for a few opportunities they could find makes you realize the awe-inspiring potential of human beings, and the responsibility to use the amazing opportunities available to us through hard work."

"10 Ways Travel Can Make You a Better, Happier Teacher" by Lillie Marshall in *Following the Equator*, EF's Educational Travel Blog,
http://equator.eftours.com/2011/01/10-ways-travel-can-make-you-a-better-happier-teacher.html
Marshall's blogs are http://www.aroundtheworldl.com and http://www.teachingtraveling.com.

Back to page one

9. Unannounced Videotaping of Teachers for Evaluation

In this blog entry quoted in *Education Week*, Seattle principal Justin Baeder reports that there is a proposal in the Wyoming legislature to make 60-minute videotapes of teachers' classes without advance notice. The videotapes would be watched by the teacher, the principal, a parent, and an instructional coach and used to evaluate each teacher. The rationale is that the

evaluation would be more reliable and accurate since these videos of classrooms are unannounced and multiple evaluators are rating each lesson.

Baeder agrees that traditional pre-announced classroom observations don't give evaluators an accurate picture of everyday teaching, but he's not convinced that the videotape scheme is any better. There's a lot more to teaching than classroom instruction, he says – communicating with parents, adjusting instruction in light of assessment information, and contributing to a culture of professional learning.

"At worst," he concludes, "the Wyoming proposal would create a system of spycams and evaluations by poorly trained observers using out-of-context footage of lessons. Even at best, it reduces excellence in teaching to excellence in presenting material and standing in front of a camera. I'm among the voices calling for improvement in the evaluation process, but I find nothing in the proposal that intelligently addresses the problems we currently face."

"Blogs of the Week: The Myth of Video Evaluation" by Justin Baeder in *Education Week*, Feb. 2, 2011 (Vol. 30, #19, p. 12)

Back to page one

10. No-Pass/No-Drive – Does It Work?

In this *Education Week* article, Mary Ann Zehr reports on policies that link adolescents' motor vehicle licenses to school grades, attendance, or behavior. The idea originated in 1988 in West Virginia – students under 18 couldn't keep their license if they had poor attendance – and has spread to 27 states. In Tennessee, for example, 3,700 minors were denied licenses or had them suspended last year. "It's looking at teenagers and asking, 'What makes them tick? What would help them keep their nose to the grindstone and show up in school?'" says Kathy Christie at the Education Commission of the States, which tracks no-pass/no-drive policies.

There is almost no research on whether this idea works, but anecdotal evidence is positive. "I think it's a very good idea," said Heidi Ables, a high-school guidance counselor in Tennessee. "I realize it may be negative to take their license, but it's something positive to work for. It's something they truly all want."

Not everyone is a fan of this approach. "Getting their bodies into the building doesn't mean they are going to learn anything," says University of California/Santa Barbara professor Russell Rumberger. "It's much better in my view to be putting resources and energy into making schools better places for kids." Yael Kidron of the American Institutes for Research agrees; using licenses as leverage doesn't address the underlying reasons for poor school attendance and performance, she says; "Experts would agree that some students may need a little push for their motivation, but a large part of the picture is helping them out. They cannot do it on their own." Tutoring and counseling are crucial supplements.

One escape hatch is home schooling, reports Zehr. When some students are truant, the family may shift to home schooling and certify their child's attendance, clearing the way for a driver's license.

"No-Pass, No-Drive Laws Spreading" by Mary Ann Zehr in *Education Week*, Jan. 26, 2011 (Vol. 30, #18, p. 1, 13), no e-link available

Back to page one

11. What Factors Close the Achievement Gap in Primary-Grade Math?

In this *Teachers College Record* article, University of Pennsylvania professor Laura Desimone and Wesleyan University professor Daniel Long report on their study of mathematics learning in kindergarten and first grade. They were particularly interested in the impact of various factors on closing the racial and economic achievement gap. Their conclusions:

• There was very little correlation between teachers' academic degrees and student achievement.

• There was a correlation between teachers using advanced procedural approaches to math teaching (multistep addition and subtraction) and increased student learning.

• There was a correlation between the amount of time spent on mathematics instruction and achievement growth.

• Students with low achievement and/or disadvantages were much more likely to get teachers who used less effective methods and spent less time on mathematics.

"If time on instruction matters, and disadvantaged students are more likely to get the weakest teachers who spend less time on instruction," conclude Desimore and Long, "then we can identify an area where schooling may be exacerbating the achievement gap but has the potential to ameliorate it."

"Teacher Effects and the Achievement Gap: Do Teachers and Teaching Quality Influence the Achievement Gap Between Black and White and High- and Low-SES Students in the Early Grades?" by Laura Desimone and Daniel Long in *Teachers College Record*, December 2010 (Vol. 112, #12, p. 3024-3073), no e-link available

Back to page one

12. Websites:

a. Black History Month resources – The Teacher Vision website has lesson plans, slide shows, and activities suitable for K-12 Black History Month. The first five are free: http://www.teachervision.fen.com/black-history-month/teacher-resources/6602.html

"Bulletin Board: Black History Month" in *Principal Leadership*, February 2011 (Vol. 11, #6, p. 6)

Back to page one

b. Black history videos – The History Channel has videos, audio clips, and photo galleries of important moments and people in African-American history: http://www.history.com/topics/black-history-month

"Bulletin Board: Black History Month" in *Principal Leadership*, February 2011 (Vol. 11, #6, p. 7)

Back to page one

c. Student assessment continuum – EdSteps, a website created by the Council of Chief State School Officers, aims to give teachers, parents, and students access to a large public library of student work samples in key skill areas on a continuum from emerging to accomplished. To sign in and access or contribute, go to http://www.edsteps.org.

"Essentials: Student Assessment Continuum" in *Journal of Staff Development*, February 2011 (Vol. 32, #1, p. 7)

Back to page one

Do you have feedback? Is anything missing?

If you have comments or suggestions, if you saw an article or web item in the last week that you think should have been summarized, or if you would like to suggest additional publications that should be covered by the Marshall Memo, please e-mail: kim.marshall8@verizon.net

About the Marshall Memo

Mission and focus:

This weekly memo is designed to keep principals, teachers, superintendents, and others very well-informed on current research and effective practices in K-12 education. Kim Marshall, drawing on 41 years' experience as a teacher, principal, central office administrator, and writer, lightens the load of busy educators by serving as their "designated reader."

To produce the Marshall Memo, Kim subscribes to 44 carefully-chosen publications (see list to the right), sifts through more than a hundred articles each week, and selects 5-10 that have the greatest potential to improve teaching, leadership, and learning. He then writes a brief summary of each article, pulls out several striking quotes, provides e-links to full articles when available, and e-mails the Memo to subscribers every Monday evening (with occasional breaks; there are about 50 issues a year).

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Publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

American Educator
American Journal of Education
American School Board Journal
ASCD, CEC SmartBriefs, Daily EdNews
Ed. Magazine
EDge
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Week
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher (TESOL)
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
JESPAR
Journal of Staff Development
Language Learner (NABE)
Middle Ground
Middle School Journal
New York Times
Newsweek
PEN Weekly NewsBlast
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal
Principal Leadership
Principal's Research Review
Reading Research Quarterly
Reading Today
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
Teachers College Record
The Atlantic Monthly
The Chronicle of Higher Education
The Language Educator
The Learning Principal
The New Yorker
The Reading Teacher
The School Administrator
Theory Into Practice
Tools for Schools